

'Allo 'Allo's reluctant hero still carries the scars—physical and emotional—from the freak accident which almost killed him

ALMOST two years after the freak accident that nearly killed him, 'Allo 'Allo's Gordon Kaye is still bearing the scars.

Gorden, 50, spent three months in hospital, including two weeks in a coma, after part of an advertising billboard smashed through the windscreen of his car and became embedded in his head during a storm in London in January 1990.

The accident and resulting scar are now the subject of a claim by the English actor against the owners of the hoarding.

During a break in filming the eighth series of the Seven Network comedy, Gorden tells TV WEEK that 1992 looks set to be the year he and his Australian fans — who were disappointed when he was unable to go on the stage tour of 'Allo 'Allo — receive compensation.

"The scar I have been left with is clearly part of the claim," Gorden says. "Other people tell me it's not all *that* noticeable ... but, like everybody when they stand in front

of the mirror, you notice imperfections — whether it be a scar, getting fat or getting bags under the eyes.

"One always over-reacts, I suppose, to one's differences. To me, the scar is very noticeable. I can assure you it's not put on to make people remember, 'Oh, yes. He had an accident'.

"I want people to forget ... I want to forget myself."

When Gorden was taken to Charing Cross Hospital after the accident, the get-well cards, flowers and gifts began flooding in from around the world — many from Australia.

The accident happened as he was about to leave for an Australian stage tour with Carmen Silvera, his on-screen wife and the rest of the cast. It went ahead with local comedian Max Gillies stepping into the role of Rene.

"I'm very grateful to the many people who wrote to me directly at the hospital and those who passed on messages," Gorden says.

"I would have been incredibly upset if I had



ABOVE: Before the accident ... Gorden Kaye with 'Allo 'Allo co-stars Carmen Silvera (left) and Vicki Michelle.

awoken in the hospital to find the producers had cancelled the Australian tour.

"I think 1992 could resolve some of those shortfalls.

"There is a strong possibility that 'Allo 'Allo, the stage show, will go to Sydney and Perth in April/



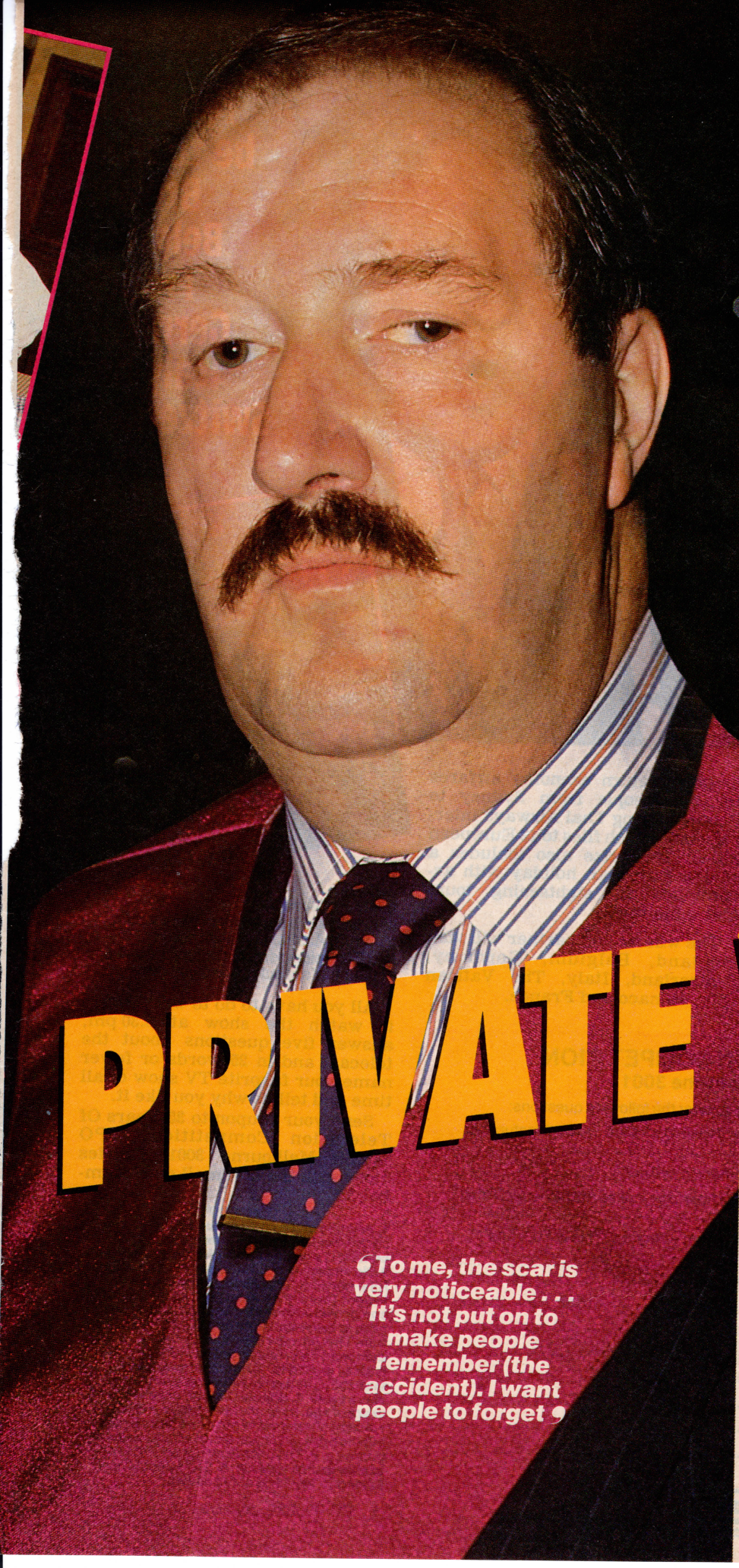
RENE'S

- Between filming another series of 'Allo 'Allo and planning for a likely tour of Australia, Gorden is in rehearsal for a London season at Christmas of the pantomime Mother Goose.

May of next year. It would give audiences, and myself, an opportunity of doing what I wish was possible back in 1990."

Gorden's speedy recovery, described by doctors as "miraculous" and "astounding", saw him back performing six months after it was thought he might die.

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PRIVATE WAR

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cussions,” he says. “I still take medication every day to keep me settled. I know nothing of the accident, other than what I was told. From what I’m told, it was horrendous.”

But for Gorden, the show, and life, must go on.

As Australian audiences are getting a dose of the seventh series (the first to be filmed since the accident), Gorden is busy working on a two-hour special and series eight before again hitting the stage this Christmas.

“There is nothing too outrageous for us,” he says with just a trace of Rene’s unusual French accent.

“As long as it’s possible, we’ll do it. It can be bizarre, outrageous, but as long as the writers think it could happen, it does.”

Gorden says he has no trouble switching from his polished English accent to that of the French Resistance cafe owner.

“I don’t think it’s much of an accent, really. From 1982 (when the pilot was made), we deliberately made his accent not-too-strongly French because I have an awful lot to say and it could get lost.

“If the audience, either at home or live, had to pause to work out what I was saying, then it would be too slow.”

Producers were amazed in 1989 when the show was bought for telecasting in France, a nation not known for its sense of humor — particularly when it’s the joke.

“It’s now dubbed into French,”

Gorden says. “I did meet the guy who does the voice of Rene. His name is Pierre Tournard and he’s taller than I am, fatter than I, and has a deeper voice. He told me he breaks up a lot when he does it.”

Kaye and his cast mates Carmen, Vicki Michelle (Yvette), Sue Hodge (Mimi), Rose Hill (Fanny) and Kirsten Cooke (Michelle) get the laughs out of their systems during rehearsals.

“It is deadpan and that’s how it’s supposed to be delivered,” Gorden says. “We tape in front of a live audience, so if we were to get the giggles all the time, it simply wouldn’t work.”

Jodie Brockwell